

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND UNITED STATES TERRITORIES
CIRCULATING QUARTER DOLLAR PROGRAM ACT -- (House of
Representatives - January 23, 2007)**

Mr. FORTUÑO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 392, the District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act, of which I am an original cosponsor. I want to thank Chairmen *Frank* and *Gutierrez* and Ranking Members *Castle* and *Bachus* for their leadership on this.

This bill, introduced by Congresswoman *Eleanor Holmes Norton*, whom I commend as well, would finally allow the District of Columbia as well as Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands the right to choose a design, which would be imprinted on the reverse of a quarter. Inadvertently these jurisdictions were excluded from the 50 State quarter dollar bill that gave each State their own coins in 1998.

I echo the sentiments of my colleagues. This bill recognizes the importance of including all Americans in the symbols of American citizenship. I am confident and hopeful that this bill will see swift congressional passage and then that the President will imprint his signature.

As Puerto Rico's sole representative in Congress of the almost 4 million American citizens who reside in Puerto Rico, it is my honor to acknowledge the significant contributions which Puerto Rican Americans have made to our Nation. In particular, Puerto Ricans have never failed in their proud patriotic commitment to their call of duty, defending this Nation and its democratic principles. Madam Speaker, Puerto Rican Americans have served with honor and distinction in the Armed Forces of the United States in all wars and conflicts since 1917 to this day.

This bill's passage is long overdue. Its enactment would be an extremely meaningful way to honor these Puerto Rican Americans. It may seem like a small gesture, but our exclusion from this program undermines how faithful Puerto Rican Americans have been to this Nation and how we revere our citizenship and fellowship with all Americans.